

BASIC FACTS ABOUT ISLAM: PAST, PRESENT, AND FUTURE

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The Muslim religion* was founded in the seventh century by Muhammad (c. 570-632). He was raised by an uncle and grew up a shepherd and camel driver. After marrying a wealthy widow named Kadijah, the first of many wives, he spent time in contemplation and prayer, and during one session lasting six months the angel Gabriel allegedly appeared to him and urged him to “proclaim.”

[* *Muslim* means “one who surrenders himself to God,” and *Islam* means surrender.]

According to Islam, over a period of 23 years Gabriel dictated revelations to Muhammad, and these became the Qur’an (Koran), Islam’s holy book. It consists of 114 suras, or chapters, arranged by length, from the shortest to the longest. Muslims believe that the Koran is the final revelation of God, superseding the Bible.

The Koran is filled with contradictions to the Bible. It says, for example, that Noah had a fourth son who died in the flood (Surah 11:42-43), that Abraham offered Ishmael rather than Isaac, and that Mary the mother of Jesus was the sister of Moses and gave birth to Jesus under a palm tree (Surah 19:28 and 19:21-27).

The Koran contains many fanciful things, such as a battle between Solomon’s army of Jinn (spirit beings) and men, birds, and ants; a battle between vultures and elephants; Jews transformed into apes for breaking the Sabbath; and God telling Moses to kill a cow and hit a dead man with it so he can revive, identify his killer, and die again. In extra-Koranic writings, Muhammad said that upon awakening one must blow his nose three times to rid himself of the devil, who spends the night in a man’s nostrils (Sahih Bukhari IV, 516; Muslim I, 462), that yawning is from Satan (Bukhari IV, 509), that if a Muslim falls asleep praying, Satan urinates in his ears (Bukhari II:245), and people who pray with their eyes lifted toward heaven might have their eyes snatched away (Muslim I, 863).

In Muhammad’s day, there was a temple in Mecca containing 360 idols, one of which was Al-ilah or Allah, which had been recognized as the chief god of Muhammad’s tribe for centuries. It was the moon god, and Islam’s sign of the crescent moon dates back to ancient Babylon and the idolatrous city states that spread across Mesopotamia after the Flood. The moon god was the chief god of Ur of the Chaldees where Abraham grew up (Leonard Woolley, *Ur of the Chaldees*, p. 175). The moon god was the chief god of ancient Sheba in southern Arabia, where the queen of Sheba hailed from. The moon god was known variously as Almaqah, Ilmaqah, Ilimquh, Wadd, Amm, and Sin. Two moon god temples have been excavated in Marib, the ancient capital of Sheba. The Bar’an Temple dates to the 2nd millennium BC (“Marib Governorate,” Yementourism.com), which takes us back to a few hundred years after the Tower of Babel.

The crescent can be traced through all of the ancient kingdoms, including Assyria, Babylon, Persia, Greece, and Rome. The crescent is still the sign of the moon god in Hinduism. In Nepal, the name of the moon god is Chandra, and his sign the crescent appears on Nepal's flag and coins.

E.M. Wherry, who translated a standard edition of the Quran, said that in pre-Islamic times Allah-worship, as well as the worship of Baal, were both involved in the worship of the sun, the moon, and the stars (*A Comprehensive Commentary on the Quran*, 1973, p. 36).

Muhammad claimed to have received revelations that Allah was not merely a chief tribal god but the only true God and that Muhammad was his chosen and exclusive prophet.

At first, Muhammad's revelations were rejected in Mecca, and he was forced to flee to Medina in AD 622. This is called **the Hijrah** and is the beginning of the Muslim calendar.

In Medina, Muhammad was successful in gaining converts except among the Jews. As a result of their obstinacy, Muhammad eliminated them by slaughter and banishment. Muhammad was infuriated that the Jews bowed to Jerusalem rather than to Mecca in their prayers. Muhammad marched on Mecca with an army of 10,000 men and overthrew the city.

In AD 620, the angel Gabriel allegedly woke Muhammad up and brought him to a winged horse called al-Buraq (which had a woman's face and a peacock's tail), which he mounted and rode to the Temple Mount in Jerusalem. The journey is known as al-Isra or Night Journey. From there he was led by Gabriel to each of Seven Heavens where he was met by Adam, John, Jesus, Enoch, Aaron, Moses, Abraham, and finally God (Dore Gold, *The Fight for Jerusalem*, 2007, p. 89). Here Mohammed allegedly received the commandment for daily prayer, initially 50 times a day and later reduced to five.

The objective of Islam is to conquer the world for Allah. By the time of his death, Muhammad had united most of Arabia under his religion and control, and his followers have gone much farther in achieving his objective. "Today, there are 44 Islamic states; half of these are Arab. There are about one and a half billion Muslims worldwide, about one-fifth of the world's population. Muslims cover half of the globe, from Northern Africa to Southern Russia, from Northern India to Indonesia. There are about 24 million Muslims in Europe, a million just in Great Britain. There are two million Muslims in France. More than a million Muslims live in Germany. There are also roughly 80 million Muslims in Russia. There are more than one billion Muslims represented at the United Nations..." (Michael Evans, *Beyond Iraq*, p. 49).

Spreading religion by the sword has been an integral part of the Islamic religion from its inception. The Koran says, "Make war upon those who believe not ... even if they be People of the Book [meaning Christians and Jews]. Make war on them until idolatry is no more and Allah's religion reigns supreme" (The Koran, Sura 2:193).

There are more than 100 verses in the Koran commanding Muslims to spread Islam with the sword. Today's violent Islamic fundamentalists who are waging *jihad* (holy war) are simply taking their religion seriously. "Islamic scholars contend it goes against Islamic law to retreat from *jihad* and adopt peace unless the Islamic force is weak and the opponent is strong. After renewed preparation to wage *jihad*, the Muslims can reconvene the hostilities. According to Islamic law, *jihad* will never cease--it will last to the Day of Judgment" (Michael Evans, *Beyond Iraq*, p. 48).

"In 712, Muslim raiders under Muhammad Qasun began the invasion of India, demolishing temples and palaces and massacring entire cities. ... 'The massacres perpetrated by Muslims in India are unparalleled in history, bigger in sheer numbers than the Holocaust...' (Serge Trifkovic, *Sword of the Prophet*, 2002, p. 12). ... Muslim conquests, involving multiple massacres of literally millions, continued for more than thirteen hundred years" (Dave Hunt, *Judgment Day*, pp. 156, 157).

SHIITES AND SUNNIS

The battle over the proper successor to Muhammad culminated in the division between Shiites (Shias) and Sunnis, a division that has had bloody consequences to our day.

The Shiites trace their lineage back to Mohammed's cousin Ali bin Abu Talib, whereas the Sunnis trace their lineage to Mohammed's advisor Abu Bakr.

After Mohammed's death in 632, there was war between Mu'awiya, the son of Abu Sufyan the original leader of Mecca, and Ali ibn Abi Talib, Muhammad's cousin and son-in-law. At the battle at Suffin, tens of thousands of Muslims were killed by fellow Muslims. Ali Talib was murdered in a mosque during morning prayers in 661 and was buried in Najaf (located in modern Iraq). This became the Shiites' holiest shrine.

The Shiites and Sunnis have been killing one another ever since.

"Within a very few years after Muhammad's murder, more than one hundred thousand Muslims had been killed in battle or were likewise murdered by fellow Muslims. Muhammad's closest companions and staunchest disciples (some of whom he had praised as perfect Muslims and to whom he had promised Paradise without martyrdom) fought each other for his wealth and power" (Dave Hunt, *Judgment Day*, p. 154).

"Tension and violence characterize the relationship between the two sects in countries where both communities reside" ("Sunni and Shiite Terrorist Networks," Jerusalem Center for Public Affairs, Dec. 18, 2002).

"The betrayal and murder of Muslims at the hands of their fellows continues to this day. Scarcely a Muslim regime is not ruled by a dictator who seized power from other Muslims, as in Syria and Iraq" (Hunt, p. 156).

Sunnis make up 85-90% of Muslims today, including the majority in Saudi Arabia, Egypt, Qatar, Kuwait, UAE, Pakistan, Afghanistan, India, Tunisia, Gaza, Turkey, and Lebanon.

Shiites form a majority in Iran, Iraq, Syria, Bahrain, Azerbaijan, and probably Yemen.

Sunnis push the harshest form of Sharia law and have birthed the most infamous of the modern terrorist groups, including Al Qaeda, the Taliban, Boko Haram, the Islamic State (ISIS or ISIL), the Muslim Brotherhood, Salafists, Hamas, and the Chechnyan terrorists.

The Islamic State has declared that Shiite Muslims deserve death ("ISIL terrorists raises flag at Turkish border," AhlulBayt News Agency, Jul. 1, 2014). But the Islamic State is also killing Sunni Muslims. In fact, they kill pretty much anyone and everyone!

Boko Haram has targeted Shiite Muslims as well as Christians ("Suicide bomber kills 20 Shia Muslims in Nigeria," *The Telegraph*, Nov. 3, 2014).

In 2011, Sunnis committed 70% of terrorist murders ("Report on Terrorism," National Counterterrorism Center, March 12, 2012).

This is not to say that no Shiite Muslims are terrorists. Hezbollah is Shiite, and Shiite Iran is a terrorist state that threatens Israel's existence and is near to possessing the nuclear bomb.

The greatest focus of the violent, revolutionary, jihadist Muslims today is toward fellow Muslims.

This is what is happening in Iraq. Saddam Hussein was a Sunni who brutally ruled over the Shiite majority in Iraq. As soon as America withdrew its forces from Iraq, the Sunni Islamic State began trying to conquer the country, with Shiites and Kurdish forces opposing them.

The same thing is happening in Syria, with Sunni forces trying to overthrow the Shiite majority government of Assad.

We see this in Yemen. In early 2015, the Houthi tribe, members of the Zaydi section of Shiite Islam, took over the government. They are said to be backed by Shiite Iran. This threatens the dominance of the Sunnis in Yemen (Al Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula or AQAP) and probably spells continuing civil war between the warring Muslims.

Saudi Arabia is a major target, with its holy cities of Mecca and Medina.

"If AQAP can maintain and strengthen its position in Yemen, then ISIL can infiltrate Saudi Arabia from the North while AQAP does the same from the South. The King of Saudi Arabia died last week, and his successor is reported to be in poor health and suffering from senility. Whether he is or not, the government of Saudi Arabia is currently

in a state of flux” (“Wheels within Wheels in the Middle East,” bayourenaissanceman.blogspot.com, January 25, 2015).

Both Sunnis and Shiites hate Israel and America and can unite in that hatred.

THE GOAL OF ISLAM

Gene Gurganus, who was a missionary in an Islamic country for 17 years, exposes the error of those who claim that Islam is a religion of peace. He explains that the goal of Islam, from the days of Mohammed, has been to “impose the Islamic faith and rule (*sharia*) in all the world.” According to Islam, the world is divided into the world of *Dar al-Harb* (the world of war or the non-Islamic people) and the *Dar al-Islam* (the world of peace or the Muslim world). Therefore, peace, by Islamic definition, is Islamic control over any part of the world, and full peace will not be achieved until Islam rules the whole world. “The presumption is that the duty of jihad will continue, interrupted only by truces, until all the world either adopts the Muslim faith or subjects to the Muslim rule” (*Peril of Islam: Telling the Truth*, Taylors, SC: Truth Publishers, 2004, pp. 59, 60).

THE TWO STAGES TO MOHAMMED’S LIFE AND THE THREE STAGES OF JIHAD

Gurganus shows that Mohammed’s life and ministry was divided into two parts: the tolerant years in Mecca and the aggressive years in Medina. In Mecca, Mohammed used teaching in an attempt to convert the people. During that period, he wrote prophecies along the lines of being at peace with non-Muslims and not forcing your religion upon others. For example, Surah 2:256 in the Koran says, “Let there be no compulsion in religion. Truth stands out clear from Error.” When that plan failed, he picked up the sword, and for the rest of his life he used the sword to force adherence to Islam. Many of the prophecies Mohammed gave during this latter period contradict the earlier prophecies and demand war against unbelievers. Those who quote from Surah 2:256 and similar ones from Mohammed’s early life ignore the fact that these were written before he picked up the sword and changed his policy.

Gurganus explains that there are **three stages of Jihad** (*Peril of Islam*, pp. 114-115).

First there is *the weakened stage*, which applies to Muslims living as a minority in a non-Muslim country. “At this stage, Muslims follow the word given to Mohammed in Mecca: ‘There is no compulsion in religion’ (Surah 2:256).”

Second, there is *the preparation stage*, which is reached when Muslims are a reasonably influential minority. At this stage they make preparations in every possible area-- financial, physical, military, mental and any other. Surah 8:59-60 says, “Against them [unbelievers] make ready your strength to the utmost of your power, including steeds of war, to strike terror into (the hearts) of the enemies of Allah and your enemies, and others besides whom you may not know, but whom Allah knows.”

The third stage is *the jihad stage*, which commences “when Muslims are a minority with strength, influence and power.” At this stage “every Muslim’s duty is to actively fight the enemy, overturning the system of the non-Muslim country and establishing Islamic authority.” This stage is based on the final revelation Mohammed received concerning jihad, which is Surah 9:5 -- “Fight and slay the Pagans wherever you find them, and seize them, beleaguer them, and lie in wait for them in every stratagem [of war].” Thus, “Muslims are commanded to kill everyone who chooses not to convert to Islam. The verse says wherever you find them. There are no geographical limits” (*Peril of Islam*, p. 114).

THE DOCTRINE OF ABROGATION

Gene Gurganus explains the doctrine of “abrogation” in the Islamic religion. According to this doctrine, Allah causes some parts of the Koran to be abrogated or abolished by later commandments. “The practice application of this principle is that when there is a contradiction between two verses in the Koran, the newer revelation overrides the previous revelation. Then the new cancels the old. You can still read the words, ‘There is no compulsion in religion’ in the Koran, but they no longer have authority because Surah 2:193 says, ‘And fight with them until there is no persecution, and religion should be only for Allah, but if they desist, then there should be no hostility except against oppressors.’ So the ‘no compulsion in religion’ verse has been *mansookh* (canceled) by revelations that came later.”

Professor Gabriel helps us understand how the Muslims interpret the Koran in this way: “This principle of abrogation is known in Arabic as *nasikh*. It means that Allah led Muhammad in a progressive revelation. Many copies of the Quran have a table that shows whether a surah is from Mecca or Medina in order to help readers know which is a newer revelation” (*Peril of Islam*, p. 69).

ANTI-CHRISTIAN

The Islamic religion denies the doctrine of the Trinity, denies that Jesus is the Son of God, and denies that Jesus died on the cross for man’s sins and that He rose from the dead. Sixteen times the Koran says Allah is not a father and has no son.

The Muslim religion has been anti-Christian since its inception. “Several volumes would be required even to begin to recite the brutality of the Islamic conquests that provide an essential background to today’s claims that ‘Islam is peace.’ ... In the foreword [to George Horton’s book *The Blight of Asia*], James W. Gerard, former U.S. Ambassador to Germany, describes it as ‘the whole story of the savage extermination of Christian civilization [by Muslims] throughout the length and breadth of the old Byzantine Empire...’ Horton himself writes, ‘This process of extermination was carried on over a considerable period of time, with fixed purpose, with system, and with painstaking minute details; and it was accomplished with unspeakable cruelties, causing the destruction of a greater number of human beings than have suffered in any similar persecution since the coming of Christ’” (Hunt, pp. 158, 159).

Gurganus observes: "Islam attacks Christianity with a vengeance. The crux of Christianity centers in the incarnation, the crucifixion, and the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead. Islam denies all three of these vital doctrines of the Christian faith. Not only that but they teach that our Holy Bible has been corrupted. The Trinity is abominable because God has no wife called Mary, and therefore Jesus Christ is not the Son of God. Christians are [considered] polytheists who believe in three gods. Although favoring Jesus with titles such as Word of God, Spirit of God, Messiah, etc., they believe he is only a prophet and a great man, but not the Son of God or Savior or Lord" (*Peril of Islam*, pp. 47, 48).

Ascribed in Arabic on the wall of The Dome of the Rock Shrine on the Temple Mount in Jerusalem are the following statements: "There is no God but Allah; He has no co-partner. The messiah, Jesus, son of Mary, is but a messenger of Allah and His word which he cast upon Mary and a spirit from Him. So believe only in Allah and of his messenger but do not say three (trinity) and it will be better for you. Allah is only one God; far be it from His glory that He should have a son. Verily the religion in Allah's sight is Islam."

ISLAMIC DOCTRINE

The Islamic "Five Pillars of the Faith" are as follows: (1) Confessing with heart and lips the shahada: "There is no god but Allah and Muhammad is his messenger." (2) Saying five daily prayers while bowing in the direction of Mecca. (3) Fasting 28 consecutive days annually during the month of Ramadan. The fast consists of abstaining from food, drink, smoking, and sex during the hours of daylight only. (4) Making a pilgrimage (haj) to Mecca at least once in one's lifetime. (5) Giving a portion of one's earnings to charity.

The Muslim religion has been anti-Jew since its inception. According to the Muslim religion, Abraham offered Ishmael rather than Isaac, and it is the Arabs, the descendants of Ishmael, who are the true sons of God. The Jews are usurpers. When the Jews refused to join his cause in Medina, Muhammad eliminated them by slaughter and banishment. Muhammad said, as recorded in the Sahih Al-Bukhari Hadith, "The last day will not come until the Muslims confront the Jews and the Muslims destroy them. In that day Allah will give a voice to the rocks and the trees and they will cry out, 'O Muslim, O Abdullah, there is yet a Jew hiding behind me. Come and kill him!'" (Dave Hunt, *Judgment Day*, p. 12).

The Muslims believe that the Jews have no true claim to the Holy Land. "There is not an Arab/Muslim map in the entire world that shows Israel. ... Arab leaders have declared repeatedly for more than fifty years, 'The struggle with the Zionist enemy is not a struggle about Israel's borders, but about Israel's existence'" (*Judgment Day*, pp. 14, 15).

PLAN TO ISLAMIZE EUROPE

"Serge Trifvovic gives startling statistics as to present developments and future Islamic goals: 'In 30 years, the Muslim population of Great Britain rose from 82,000 to 2 million. In Germany, there are 4 million Muslims, mostly Turks, and over 5 million in France, mostly North Africans. ... Almost a tenth of all babies born in EU countries are Muslims, and in the moribund Brussels, the figure was over 50 percent. With the expanding

numbers and the creation of distinctly Muslim neighborhoods in Western, primarily European cities, the initial detachment of culture from territory has been reversed, and the bold notion of conquest by demographic rather than military means entered the activist's minds. The blueprint was developed over two decades ago, in 1981, when the Third Islamic Summit Conference of Kaaba adopted the *Mecca Declaration*. It stated as follows: We have resolved to conduct Jihad with all the means at our disposal so as to free our territory from occupation. (The whole world is their territory.) We declare that the oppression suffered by Muslim minorities and communities in many countries is a flagrant offense against the rights and dignity of man. We appeal to all states in which there are Islamic minorities to allow them full liberty. We are convinced of the need to propagate the precepts of Islam and its cultural influence in Muslim societies and throughout the world” (Gene Gurganus, *Peril of Islam*, pp. 53, 54).

WHEN LIES ARE JUSTIFIED

“Philosopher Ibn Taymiyah (1263-1328) wrote a book titled *The Sword on the Neck of the Accuser of Muhammad*. In it he described how Muslims should live when they are in the minority. ‘Believers when in a weakened stage in a non-Muslim country should forgive and be patient with People of the Book [Jews and Christians] when they insult Allah and his prophet by any means. Believers should lie to People of the Book to protect their lives and religion.’ ... There’s an Islamic proverb that says, ‘If you can’t cut your enemies’ hand, kiss it.’ When Mohammed was weak in Mecca, he was a lamb. When he was strong in Medina, he was a lion. Muslims living in predominantly Muslim countries do not hesitate to oppress and persecute Christians and Jews. On the other hand, Muslims living in Christian nations or nations where the majority profess to be Christians are very good at presenting themselves as loving, caring and forgiving people” (Gurganus, *Peril of Islam*, p. 107).

SHUTTING DOWN THE DEBATE

“The Council on American Islamic Relations (CAIR) is one of the more aggressive intimidators. It fronts as a civil rights organization protecting Muslims from harassment. Its main agenda is helping Hamas against Israel and promoting militant Islam’s agenda in the United States. Steve Pomerantz, a former chief of counterterrorism for the FBI, explains that ‘any objective assessment ... leads to the conclusion that CAIR, leaders, and its activities, effectively give aid to international terrorist groups. Unfortunately, CAIR is but one of a new generation of new groups in the United States that hide under a veneer of civil rights or academic status but in fact are tethered to a platform that supports terrorism.’ ... they picketed the *Dallas Morning News* for revealing the Hamas infrastructure in Texas. Muslims launched a campaign against the *Tampa Tribune* for uncovering the Islamic Jihad in Tampa. ... CAIR also denounced the *Atlantic Monthly* for an article on militant Islamic violence in Sudan and a Senate Subcommittee for holding hearings on Foreign Terrorists in America: ‘Five Years after the World Trade Center Bombing.’ As CAIR promotes militant Islam in the United States, it focuses on one main point: silencing those who have anything negative to say about militant Islam. ... It went

after *Reader's Digest* for documenting the repression of Christians in several Muslim countries" (*Peril of Islam*, pp. 105, 106).

"The Chairman of the Council on American-Islamic Relations, Omar M. Ahmad, told a crowd of California Muslims in July 1998, 'Islam isn't in America to be equal to any other faith, but to become dominant. The Koran ... should be the highest authority in America and Islam the only accepted religion on Earth' (report in *San Ramon Valley Herald* of a speech to California Muslims in July 1998, quoted by Daniel Pipes in "CAIR: Moderate Friends of Terror," *New York Post*, April 22, 2002)" (*Peril of Islam*, p. 151).

SAUDI ARABIA'S AGENDA

"The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia is the most intolerant Islamic government in the world. The practice of any religion besides Islam is strictly forbidden. ... Saudi Arabia funds the building of three to four mosques a week in our country while thousands of Christians working in Saudi Arabia have no religious freedom at all. ... Of the more than 1,200 mosques in America, more than 80 percent have been built with Saudi money. Saudi Arabia alone has spent \$87 billion since 1973 to spread Islam throughout the United States and the Western hemisphere. ... Saudis are embracing 'Wahabbism,' an acute and violent strain of Islam. Osama bin Laden consider[ed] himself a 'Wahabbi.' So one has every reason to believe that what is being taught in these mosques and Islamic centers supported by Saudi Arabia is Wahbbism. Black converts make up the fastest-growing segment of the Muslim population in America. An estimated 60 to 90 percent of all U.S. converts to Islam are black" (*Peril of Islam*, pp. 123, 143).

ISLAMIC MESSIAH

Shiite Muslims are expecting an Islamic messiah, called the **12th Imam** or the **Imam Mahdi** or the **Hidden Imam**, to return to earth and establish Allah's kingdom, and it is thought that Jesus will accompany him. The Imam Mahdi, believed by Shiites to have disappeared as a child in A.D. 941, is supposed to return and reign on earth for seven years before bringing about a final judgment and the end of the world ("Jesus, Mahdi Both Coming, Says Iran's Ahmadinejad," *WorldNetDaily*, Dec. 19, 2006).

Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, former president of Iran, believes in the coming of the Imam Madhi and Iranian radio has broadcast prophecies of his coming.

"In short, when he reappears, peace, justice and security will overcome oppression and deceit and one global government, the most perfect ever, will be established. ... Another beautiful moment of the Savior's appearance is the coming down of Prophet Jesus (PBUH) from heaven. Hazrat Mahdi receives him courteously and asks him to lead the prayers. But Jesus says you are more qualified for this than me. We read in the book *Tazkarat ol-Olia*, 'the Mahdi will come with Jesus son of Mary accompanying him.' This indicates that these two great men complement each other. Imam Mahdi will be the leader while Prophet Jesus will act as his lieutenant in the struggle against oppression and establishment of justice in the world. Jesus had himself given the tidings of the coming of

God's last messenger and will see Mohammad's ideals materialize in the time of the Mahdi. ... Be joyous, my heart, miracles of the Messiah will soon be here. ... Grieve not of sorrow and melancholy, as assured I was ... that a Savior will come, it's clear" ("Police Storm Home," *WorldNetDaily*, June 23, 2007).

The following is an excerpt from the *London Telegraph*, Jan. 14, 2006:

"As Iran rushes towards confrontation with the world over its nuclear programme, the question uppermost in the mind of western leaders is 'What is moving its President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad to such recklessness?' ... The most remarkable aspect of Mr Ahmadinejad's piety is his devotion to the Hidden Imam, the Messiah-like figure of Shia Islam, and the president's belief that his government must prepare the country for his return. One of the first acts of Mr Ahmadinejad's government was to donate about £10 million to the Jamkaran mosque, a popular pilgrimage site where the pious come to drop messages to the Hidden Imam into a holy well. **All streams of Islam believe in a divine saviour, known as the Mahdi, who will appear at the End of Days.** A common rumour--denied by the government but widely believed--is that Mr Ahmadinejad and his cabinet have signed a 'contract' pledging themselves to work for the return of the Mahdi and sent it to Jamkaran. Iran's dominant 'Twelver' sect believes this will be Mohammed ibn Hasan, regarded as the 12th Imam, or righteous descendant of the Prophet Mohammad. He is said to have gone into 'occlusion' in the [tenth] century, at the age of five. His return will be preceded by cosmic chaos, war and bloodshed. After a cataclysmic confrontation with evil and darkness, the Mahdi will lead the world to an era of universal peace."

We see that Jesus is given a subordinate position in these prophecies to that of the 12th Imam, who is alleged to be a direct descendant of Mohammed.

According to the Bible, the next event on God's calendar is the Catching Away of church age saints (1 Thessalonians 4:13 - 5:5), followed by the appearance of the Antichrist as a man of peace with a prophet accompanying him (2 Thess. 2:3-12; Revelation 13). Doubtless one or the other of these men will be accepted by the Jews as their Messiah and by apostate Christians as theirs and by the Muslims as theirs. Mankind will rejoice, thinking that the Middle East problem has been solved and the long-awaited "Age of Aquarius" has arrived, but the peace party will be short-lived and the Antichrist will show his true colors, setting himself up as god in Israel's temple and requiring the world's worship at the point of death.

"And I saw, and behold a white horse: and he that sat on him had a bow; and a crown was given unto him: and he went forth conquering, and to conquer" (Rev. 6:2).

"And then shall that Wicked be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of his coming: Even him, whose coming is after the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders, and with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved. And for this cause God shall send them strong

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